

## ***Environmental Protection through Public Involvement***

Office of Counsel  
to the Governor

Attorney General's Office

Department of Environmental  
Protection

Department of Health and  
Senior Services

Division of Law & Public  
Safety

Department of  
Community Affairs

Department of Transportation

Department of  
Human Services

Department of Agriculture

Department of Education

Economic Development  
Authority

PO Box 402  
Trenton, NJ  
08625-0402  
Phone: 609-341-5311  
Alt. Phone: 609-777-0319  
Fax: 609-984-3962

## **Guidance for Submitting an Environmental Justice Petition**

**The petition process is not intended to be a burden on petitioners. However, if you provide answers to a few specific questions the Environmental Justice Task Force can better evaluate your petition. For help in creating a petition, please call the Environmental Justice Program at 609-777-0319 or 609-341-5311.**

The following document provides guidance for concerned community members formulating Environmental Justice petitions under Executive Order #96. The Environmental Justice Task Force has provided this document to help ensure that adequate information is received in efforts to evaluate the Environmental Justice petitions.

For more information about the Environmental Justice Task Force, please visit the State of New Jersey's Environmental Justice Task Force Web site at: <http://www.nj.gov/ejtaskforce> or call 609-777-0319.

- I. All 2004 Cycle 1 petitions are due by November 15, 2004.**  
All petitions must be postmarked by Nov. 15, 2004 and sent to NJDEP's Trenton Offices:

NJDEP Environmental Justice Task Force  
Office of the Commissioner  
P.O. Box 402  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402

Please note that the Task Force anticipates accepting petitions for Cycle 2 in Dec. 2004, and quarterly thereafter. Future petition rounds and deadlines will be announced on the Environmental Justice Task Force Web site at: <http://www.nj.gov/ejtaskforce>. Please read the "Petition Process" section of this document for further information.

- II. Identify stakeholders submitting the Environmental Justice Petition**  
Provide a list of any faith-based, community-based, academic, environmental, etc. organization represented in this petition. Please note that you do not have to be an organized group to qualify as a petitioner.

- III. Get the required number of signatures**  
Petitions must have at least 50 signatures from either residents or workers in the area of concern. At least 25 of those signatures must be from adults who live in the petitioning community. Local government approval is not needed in order to submit a petition. Use the attached petition signature page to circulate and certify petitioners.

#### **IV. Please provide current contact information**

Please identify the main person with whom the Environmental Justice Task Force and Environmental Justice Program may communicate on a regular basis. This person will serve as the main contact for your petition. Since all communications will go through this contact, it is important that this person be accessible for phone calls and should have regular access to the Internet. Please note that many public libraries and schools offer Internet access for public use. Please provide an alternate contact as well.

##### **Main Contact Person**

Name:

Address:

Affiliation:

Phone Number:

Cell Phone Number

(Optional):

Fax Number:

E-mail Address:

Website (Optional):

##### **Alternate contact person**

Name:

Address:

Affiliation:

Phone Number:

Cell Phone Number (Optional):

Fax Number:

E-mail Address:

Website (Optional):

---

**V. Demonstrate why your community qualifies as a disproportionately-impacted minority or low-income community under Executive Order #96. Executive Order #96 can be found on the Internet at <http://www.nj.gov/infobank/circular/eom96.htm>. Use the following questions to help guide your justifications.**

1. Please provide a brief description of the area of concern addressed by this petition. Please include municipality name, neighborhood name(s), zip code(s), street boundaries, natural boundaries, census tract (if known), block and lot numbers, and/or county.
  - Use the Department of Community Affairs' Census Tract Data Locator to find this information: <http://www.nj.gov/dca/hmfa/censustract.htm>.

*Example:*

Municipality: Long Branch

Zip Code: 07740

Street Boundaries: Area within Broadway west to Liberty St., and east to Long Branch Avenue and, Florence Avenues and north to Atlantic Avenue. Mostly concerned with area around the Creek.

Census Tract: 8056

County: Monmouth

2. Please provide demographic information about the area of concern. Please provide information such as income, race and/or ethnicity population statistics. Below are several websites that can aid in locating demographic information about your town. It is best to provide information relevant to your area of concern. Thus, you may want to search for information based on a particular area or neighborhood of your municipality.
  - Municipal and County websites: Find your municipality at: <http://www.nj.gov/localgov.htm>.
  - US Census **American Fact Finder**: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_sse=on)
  - Environmental Defense's **Scorecard**: <http://www.scorecard.org>
  - Environmental Protection Agency's **Enviromapper**: <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/ej/>
  - DEP's Environmental Justice Program Resource Page: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/resources.htm>

For assistance locating demographic information, please call DEP's Environmental Justice Program at 609-777-0319.

3. Please tell us about the environmental concerns in your neighborhood. Please be as specific as possible. *For example: "We know that Company A emits odors and we are unsure whether they are hazardous to our health. We are interested in knowing what our risks are."* In addition, please describe any specific events such as chemical releases, odors, contaminated sites, industrial/truck activity, etc., in the past or present, that you are concerned about. Include dates when applicable. How long have these issues been a problem for your community?
4. Please identify possible solutions or needs that would help address the environmental concerns raised in this petition. For example, are you interested in planting trees, do you think there should be increased enforcement due to odor issues, etc.

---

**VI. Assess your capacity to participate in Action Plan implementation. Use the following questions to help guide your justifications.**

*Please note: The signatories' capacity to participate will have no bearing on the decision of the Environmental Task Force to either accept or deny the petition. Answers to these questions are used for informational purposes only to help the Task Force better understand community dynamics.*

1. Are the signatories and/or stakeholders submitting this petition an organized group or is your group being established in furtherance of this petition process? If so, how long has the group been in existence and what sort of activities have they been involved in (e.g., regular meetings, press conferences, information distribution, etc.)?
2. Are the signatories on this petition representative of organizations either working or living outside of the affected area? Please provide more information about these other interested stakeholders.
3. Are there representatives from several organizations acting as the main stakeholders in your petition? If so, in what capacity are they acting, i.e., technical assistance, etc.? If so, which group(s) is/are geographically living or working closest to the area of concern?
4. Would the petition signatories like to have a public meeting with the Environmental Justice Task Force or would you prefer to meet privately with representatives of the Task Force?
5. Would any of the petitioning signatories be willing and able to circulate flyers or information to help educate and communicate with neighbors who may have your same concerns? How many volunteers would you estimate would be willing to help implement the action plan in various capacities?
6. Do any of the petition signatories have access to a facility (e.g., church, school, etc.) in the neighborhood where community meetings can be held? If so, please provide the name of the facility and the contact information necessary to reserve the space.

---

**VII. Assess your communication and information needs. Please use the following questions to guide your justifications.**

1. Has there been any contact with any government agency regarding the concerns in this petition? What were the outcomes? Please include approximate times, contact information (name, phone number, address, etc.), organization (local, state or federal agencies, companies, etc.) and the reason why you contacted them. Please explain any communication breakdowns or bottlenecks that have hindered you from getting more information about the concerns raised in this petition.
2. Have you been provided with enough information about your concerns by companies, the NJDEP or other local, state or federal entity that gave you a clear understanding of your concerns? If not, from whom would you most like to receive this information, e.g. the NJDEP, local government, a company, other?
3. How many people would you be able to help assemble in the event an information session were to be held about the concerns raised in the petition or other Task Force agency programs or processes? What would be the best time for this meeting, i.e., during the day, afternoon, or evening?

**VIII. Current Pending Actions**

1. Are any of the petition signatories or related stakeholders currently working with any state, county or local government agency to resolve issues specified in this petition? If so, provide the status of any pending actions, i.e., permits, health studies, etc.
2. Are any of the signatories in litigation with parties related to the environmental concerns presented in this petition?

**IX. What to Expect After Submitting Your Petition**

1. All petitioners will receive a letter acknowledging receipt of their submitted petitions
2. NJDEP's Environmental Justice Staff will call and/or make arrangements to conduct a site visit to interview petitioners to clarify petition elements, prior to the petition being reviewed by the Environmental Justice Task Force.
3. The Environmental Justice Task Force will review all petitions to make sure they comply with the intent of the Environmental Justice Executive Order. In order to develop effective action plans with petitioning communities and other relevant stakeholders, the Environmental Justice Task Force will select five petitions based on the criteria developed by the Task Force from all petitions submitted during the current open round.
4. The Environmental Justice Task Force will review each petition and send a letter to the petitioner acknowledging the Task Force decision to accept, defer or deny the submitted petition. Accepted petitions will then move into Action Plan development phase. Petitions that are not accepted during the current cycle will be further discussed with the petitioner and, if appropriate, will be automatically given priority status for review in the next open cycle.

**For information on the Environmental Justice Program, please call NJDEP at 609-777-0319 or visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/ej>.**